

House Republican Press Release

March 15, 2004
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Press Conference On Medical Use of Marijuana



On March 17, at 9:30AM, Reps. Toni Boucher, Bob Duff and Bob Farr will host Dr. Andrea Barthwell, Deputy Director for Reduction Demand of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy at a press conference to raise public awareness about the negative consequences of legalizing smoked marijuana for medical purposes. Speakers include, State Rep. Boucher, Mark Kraus, M.D., and others.

The issue is urgent: This month the Joint Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut legislature will vote on House Bill 5355 that would legalize smoked medical marijuana. The event will take place at the Legislative Office Building, Room 1E, in Hartford. It is hosted by the Courage To Speak Foundation, Inc.

"For each symptom or disease that marijuana legalizers suggest can be treated with smoked marijuana, there is a variety of existing, scientifically proven options available to the clinician including marijuana derivatives. Claims that smoking marijuana is more effective than taking these alternatives remain unproven," says Dr. Barthwell. "Smoked marijuana, a Schedule 1 drug under the Federal Controlled Substances Act, has been rejected by the American Medical Association, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the American Glaucoma Society, the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Cancer Society."

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Dr. Barthwell will be introduced by Ginger Katz of Norwalk, founder and president of The Courage To Speak Foundation, a prevention organization focusing on educating parents and children about the dangers of drug use.

"Children are already at extremely high risk for using threshold drugs such as marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol," says Ms. Katz. "Research has shown that environment is a major influence on whether a child will use drugs. With the availability of FDA-approved drugs to help AIDS and cancer patients, we should be very wary of legalizing smoked marijuana. It will confuse and mislead millions of our children by sending the dangerous message that marijuana is a medicine and therefore safe. The mission of our organization is to empower youth to be drug free. If this bill is passed, our ability to convince children that marijuana is unsafe will face a serious challenge."

Contact: Ginger Katz
President of the Courage to Speak Foundation, Inc.
We are dedicated to.....
"Saving Lives by Inspiring Youth to be Drug Free"
1-877-431-3295

www.couragetospeak.org

You may visit SAMHSA web site. The Courage to Speak has the honor of being featured on SAMHSA website sponsored by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services Please visit.... **[Partners for Substance Abuse Prevention | Highlighted Partner](#)**